

Virginia Board of Education Agenda Item



Agenda Item: D

Date: October 22, 2015

Title	Final Review of Guidance Related to the <i>Partially Accredited</i> Rating Included in the Revisions to the <i>Regulations Establishing the Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia</i> (8VAC 20-131 under the Fast Track Provisions of the Administrative Process Act)		
Presenter	Shelley Loving-Ryder, Assistant Superintendent for Student Assessment and School Improvement		
E-mail	Shelley.Loving-Ryder@doe.virginia.gov	Phone	(804) 225-2102

Purpose of Presentation:

Action required by state or federal law or regulation.

Previous Review or Action:

Previous review and action. Specify date and action taken below:

July 23, 2015: Approved revisions to the *Regulations Establishing the Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia*

September 10, 2015: First Review of Guidance Related to the *Partially Accredited* Rating Included in the Revisions to the *Regulations Establishing the Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia* (8VAC 20-131 under the Fast Track Provisions of the Administrative Process Act)

Action Requested:

Final review: Action requested at this meeting.

Alignment with Board of Education Goals: Please indicate (X) all that apply:

X	Goal 1: Accountability for Student Learning
	Goal 2: Rigorous Standards to Promote College and Career Readiness
	Goal 3: Expanded Opportunities to Learn
	Goal 4: Nurturing Young Learners
	Goal 5: Highly Qualified and Effective Educators
	Goal 6: Sound Policies for Student Success
	Goal 7: Safe and Secure Schools
	Other Priority or Initiative. Specify:

Background Information and Statutory Authority:

Goal 1: In providing guidance regarding the new “partially accredited” rating, the Board of Education will establish criteria necessary to ensure accountability of student learning.

Summary of Important Issues:

While the Board of Education is conducting a comprehensive review of the *Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia* (8 VAC 20-131), the Board initiated a separate fast track regulatory action for the sole purpose of addressing legislation approved by the General Assembly during previous sessions. Two of the bills covered in the fast track action, House Bill 1873 and Senate Bill 1320 (2015), require the Board to amend the Standards of Accreditation by the 2016-2017 school year to establish additional accreditation ratings that recognize the progress of schools and student growth.

To address the requirements of these bills, the Board added a new accreditation rating, *Partially Accredited*. Within this new rating, schools with Graduation and Completion Indices or pass rates that are within a narrow margin of the benchmarks required for full accreditation may be assigned ratings of *Partially Accredited: Approaching the Benchmark—Graduation and Completion Index* or *Partially Accredited: Approaching the Benchmark—Pass Rates*. Schools with Graduation and Completion Indices or pass rates that are not within a narrow margin but have shown considerable improvement may be assigned ratings of *Partially Accredited: Improving School—Graduation and Completion Index* or *Partially Accredited: Improving School—Pass Rates*.

The Governor approved the fast track revisions to the regulations, and they became effective on October 8, 2015. It is important to note that the Governor approved these revisions with the condition that, as part of the comprehensive review of the Standards for Accrediting Public Schools, specific criteria for the new accreditation ratings would be developed and written into these regulations.

Proposed guidance for the new *Partially Accredited* ratings is presented in Attachment A. The criteria included in the guidance will be used to prepare accreditation ratings for the 2015-2016 school year. Since the guidance document was reviewed at the September 10, 2015, board meeting, it has been revised to include: 1) a rationale for the pass rate increases required for a school to be rating as “*Partially Accredited: Improving School—Pass Rate*,” and 2) a provision for local school boards to submit an appeal of a school’s accreditation rating to the Board of Education. Changes since the September Board meeting are highlighted in yellow in the guidance document.

Impact on Fiscal and Human Resources:

The administrative impact required in developing and disseminating this guidance will be absorbed within existing resources.

Timetable for Further Review/Action:

Upon approval by the Board, the guidance related to the *Partially Accredited* rating will be communicated to school divisions via a Superintendent’s Memorandum and posted on the Department of Education Web site.

Superintendent's Recommendation:

The Superintendent of Public Instruction recommends that the Board of Education approve the *Guidance for the Determination of the New Accreditation Rating: “Partially Accredited.”*

Rationale:

Approving the guidance document will allow Department staff to finalize the calculations of the 2015-2016 accreditation ratings so that they can be released to schools divisions and to the public.

Guidance for the Determination of the New Accreditation Rating:

“Partially Accredited”

Background: The 2015 Acts of Assembly directed the Board of Education to “promulgate regulations establishing additional accreditation ratings that recognize the progress of schools that do not meet accreditation benchmarks but have significantly improved their pass rates, are within specified ranges of benchmarks, or have demonstrated significant growth for the majority of their students. The Board shall implement such regulations no later than the 2016-2017 school year.”

The Board approved revisions to the *Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia* that incorporated these new ratings in July 2015 under the Fast Track Provisions of the Administrative Process Act. The changes to the regulations are expected to be effective October 8, 2015.

Guidance: The following guidance provides additional information regarding the criteria that will be used to assign schools the new accreditation rating—“Partially Accredited” as described in 8VAC20-131-300. Specifically, guidance for the following categories under the “Partially Accredited” ratings is provided:

- Partially Accredited: Approaching Benchmark-Graduation and Completion Index
- Partially Accredited: Approaching Benchmark-Pass Rate
- Partially Accredited: Improving School- Graduation and Completion Index
- Partially Accredited: Improving School-Pass Rate

3. Partially Accredited. A school which meets criteria as prescribed by the Board of Education will be designated as Partially Accredited according to the specific categories shown below.

a. Approaching Benchmark (within specified margins):

(1) Graduation and Completion Index. Based on components of the graduation and completion index as described in 8VAC20-131-280 B 2, a school will be rated as Partially Accredited: Approaching Benchmark-Graduation and Completion Index when its eligible students meet pass rates required for full accreditation and its graduation and completion index is within a narrow margin of the minimum threshold as prescribed by the board. A school may remain in the Partially Accredited: Approaching Benchmark-Graduation and Completion Index status for no more than three consecutive years, unless an extension is granted based on criteria established by the board.

Guidance:

To achieve a rating of *Partially Accredited: Approaching Benchmark-Graduation and Completion Index*, the eligible students in the school must have met the pass rates required for

Attachment A

full accreditation in all four content areas (English, mathematics, science and history/social science) and the school must achieve 84 percentage points on the Board of Education's graduation and completion index.

(2) Pass Rate. Based on tests administered in the previous academic year, a school will be rated as Partially Accredited: Approaching Benchmark-Pass Rate if the school does not meet the requirements for full accreditation in all of the four core academic subject areas but the pass rate in each subject area either (i) meets the pass rate required for full accreditation or (ii) is within a narrow margin of the pass rate required for full accreditation, as defined by the board. A school may remain in the Partially Accredited: Approaching Benchmark-Pass Rate status for no more than three consecutive years, unless an extension is granted based on criteria established by the board.

Guidance:

A school will be rated as *Partially Accredited: Approaching Benchmark-Pass Rate* if the school does not meet the requirements for full accreditation but the school's pass rate in each of the four content areas (English, mathematics, science, and history/social science) either: (1) meets the benchmark required for full accreditation or (2) meets the narrow margin criteria. Specific requirements for the *Partially Accredited: Approaching Benchmark-Pass Rate* are provided in Table A.

Table A—Pass Rate Requirements for Full Accreditation or Narrow Margin			
	Pass Rate Required for Full Accreditation	or	Pass Rate Required to Meet Narrow Margin Criteria
English	75%	or	73%
Mathematics	70%	or	68%
Science	70%	or	68%
History/Social Science	70%	or	68%

b. Improving School (meets criteria for improvement or student growth, or both, over previous year):

(1) Graduation and Completion Index. Based on components of the graduation and completion index as described in 8VAC20-131-280 B 2, a school will be rated as Partially Accredited: Improving School-Graduation and Completion Index when its eligible students meet pass rates required for full accreditation, but its graduation and completion index is not within the established narrow margin of the minimum threshold prescribed by the board; however it has achieved sufficient improvement in its graduation and completion index from the previous year, as prescribed by the board. A school may remain in the Partially Accredited: Improving School-Graduation and Completion Index status for no more than three consecutive years, unless an extension is granted based on criteria established by the board.

Guidance:

A school will be rated as *Improving School-Graduation and Completion Index*, if it fails to meet the requirements for the *Approaching Benchmark-Graduation and Completion Index* rating but 1) the eligible students in the school have met the pass rates required for full accreditation in all four content areas (English, mathematics, science and history/social science) and 2) the school's Graduation and Completion Index has improved by at least one point from the previous year.

(2) **Pass Rate.** Based on tests administered in the previous academic year, a school will be rated as Partially Accredited: Improving School-Pass Rate if the school does not meet the requirements for full accreditation or for Partially Accredited: Approaching Benchmark-Pass Rate, but in each of the four core academic subject areas, one of the following criteria is met: (i) the pass rate meets the benchmark required for full accreditation; (ii) the pass rate is within a narrow margin of the benchmark required for full accreditation, as defined by the board; (iii) the school has demonstrated sufficient improvement in its pass rate from the previous year as defined by the board; or (iv) the school has demonstrated sufficient student growth, as defined by the board. A school may remain in the Partially Accredited: Improving School-Pass Rate status for no more than three consecutive years, unless an extension is granted based on criteria established by the board.

Guidance:

A school will be rated as *Partially Accredited: Improving School-Pass Rate* if the school does not meet the requirements for full accreditation or for Partially Accredited: Approaching Benchmark-Pass Rate but the school's pass rate in each of the four content areas (English, mathematics, science, and history/social science) either: 1) meets the benchmark required for full accreditation, or 2) meets the narrow margin criteria or, 3) has shown sufficient improvement as compared to the pass rate for the previous year. Specific requirements for the *Partially Accredited: Improving School* rating are provided in Tables B and C below.

Table B—Requirements for Full Accreditation, Narrow Margin, and Improving Pass Rate					
	Pass Rate Required for Full Accreditation	or	Pass Rate Required to Meet Narrow Margin Criteria	or	Criteria to meet <i>Improving School- Pass Rate</i>
English	75%	or	73%	or	See Table C
Mathematics	70%	or	68%	or	See Table C
Science	70%	or	68%	or	See Table C
History/Social Science	70%	or	68%	or	See Table C

Table C—Requirements for Sufficient Pass Rate Improvement			
Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies		English	
If the school's pass rate for last year was:	The school's pass rate for this year must have increased by at least:	If the school's pass rate for last year was:	The school's pass rate for this year must have increased by at least:
66 – 67*	*	71 – 72*	*
65	2 points	70	2 points
60 – 64	3 points	65 – 69	4 points
50 – 59	9 points	60 – 64	7 points
40 – 49	10 points	45 – 59	11 points
Below 40	15 points	Below 45	15 points
* A school with a previous year's pass rate of 66 or 67 in Mathematics, Science, or History/Social Science or a previous year's pass rate of 71 or 72 in English cannot meet the criteria for Partially Accredited: Improving School. If the school does not meet the criteria for Partially Accredited: Approaching Benchmark in the subject, the school would be Partially Accredited: Warned.			

The pass rate increases necessary for a school to be rated as *Partially Accredited: Improving School—Pass Rate* are differentiated based on the previous year's pass rate. Schools with lower pass rates in the previous year must make greater gains to be eligible for this rating. In most cases the required increases would allow schools to reach full accreditation in three years. While this is not the case for the schools with the lowest pass rates, the required pass rate increases, if met, could provide justification to request an extension from the Board before the school is denied accreditation.

Note: Student growth data for reading and mathematics are not available for the calculation of the 2015-2016 accreditation ratings. Therefore, guidance for the inclusion of student growth data in the partially accredited: improving school rating is not included in this document. Additional guidance regarding the use of student growth data in the calculation of this rating will be provided as it becomes available.

School Division Appeals

In some limited situations there may be circumstances affecting student performance that would warrant special consideration by the Board in assigning an accreditation rating to a school. Should such a situation occur, the local school board must submit a request to the Board of Education signed by the chairman of the school board and the school division superintendent explaining why the school board is appealing the accreditation rating. The appeal must include documentation supporting the request to change the accreditation rating and may include other measures of student progress. The Department of Education will provide school divisions with additional guidance regarding the process for making such an appeal to the Board and the required documentation.